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RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ATHENS 001049

SIPDIS

AMEMBASSY ANKARA PASS TO AMCONSUL ADANA
AMEMBASSY ASTANA PASS TO USOFFICE ALMATY
AMEMBASSY BERLIN PASS TO AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMEMBASSY BERLIN PASS TO AMCONSUL LEIPZIG
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PASS TO AMEMBASSY PODGORICA
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI PASS TO AMCONSUL ST PETERSBURG
AMEMBASSY ATHENS PASS TO AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PASS TO AMCONSUL VLADIVOSTOK
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PASS TO AMCONSUL YEKATERINBURG

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SUBJECT: Scenesetter: Deputy Secretary's Bilat with FM Bakoyannis,
June 28

REF: ATHENS 757; ATHENS 1033

CLASSIFIED BY: Ambassador Daniel V. Speckhard, Ambassador, State,
U.S. Embassy, Athens; REASON: 1.4(A), (B), (D)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Welcome back to Greece! Your visit will focus primarily on broader European security issues, yet it will also provide an opportunity on the bilateral side to reinforce a message of the new Administration's desire to put on a new course our relationship with Greece, which had become severely strained at the end of the last Administration. While the focus of the one-seat-majority Greek government is on confronting deep political, economic and security challenges, there is a strong interest on their side in a more cooperative approach to address shared international challenges. Foremost amongst these is our common interest in stabilizing the conflict zones in South-Central Asia, as Greece is at the frontlines of the refugee flows coming to Europe. Dora will highlight her efforts to provide additional assistance to Afghanistan and Pakistan and ask for support in obtaining re-admission agreements with these countries as well as support in getting Turkey to meet its responsibility for repatriation of illegal migrants. She will also raise her concern with Turkey's increasingly aggressive posture with overflights of Greek Islands and stress that this is making it increasingly difficult to continue to engage politically on key issues and to support Turkey's EU accession. She will also insist that we portray the signing of the Visa Waiver documents that is to take place in conjunction with your visit as the final major hurdle to Greece's entry into the program, and that the remaining steps be presented to the public as technical implementation measures.

¶2. (C) As for the substance of the OSCE discussion of European security, you will find the Greeks largely in agreement with our approach: they want to launch a "Corfu Process;" in Bakoyannis's words: an open ended dialogue at ambassador/expert level, grounded in the OSCE and focusing on all OSCE "baskets" of security including 21st century security challenges, with a stocktaking in Athens at the December OSCE Ministerial. Dora will also raise her proposal for a Women Against Terrorism Conference. She is waiting to firm up the date (probably October) until she has a chance to talk to S about her possible participation. End Summary.

THE POLITICAL CONTEXT:

¶3. (C) The OSCE ministerial in Corfu is intended by Foreign Minister Bakoyannis to give a much needed boost to a Greek government that is confronting a range of serious challenges and partisan criticism from all quarters. After the riots last December in response to the police shooting of a teenager, and the ongoing inundation of central Athens by migrants largely

originating from conflict zones in the Middle East and Central Asia, the Greek public registered their dissatisfaction in a massive abstention or protest vote for fringe parties (mostly on the right) in the recent European Parliament elections. This protest derived from Greeks' dissatisfaction with the government's apparent inability to provide security - a feeling exacerbated by the economic downturn and, more recently, the assassination of a policeman by the terrorist group Revolutionary Sect.

14. (C) One undeniable bright spot in the GOG's public performance this year has been the FM's role as CIO - this has permitted Greece to punch above its weight internationally, and Dora, who has her eye on the Prime Ministership, is working it astutely. Personally much more open and friendly to the USG and U.S. positions than most recent GOG ministers, Dora has looked to her relationship with the Secretary as an important signal that she is a serious player. As such, she held off announcing a final decision to hold the informal meeting in Corfu until she got a signal from the USG that S would attend. She will accept the loss of the Secretary's presence with understanding, but will seek U.S. support to ensure that the Ministerial is seen as a success in spite of the Secretary's absence.

NEW BILATERAL PROSPECTS:

15. (C) The enormously positive views in Greece toward the new U.S. President have eroded the broad (but not so deep) anti-Americanism that has characterized Greece for the last several decades. We are seizing the opportunity to reshape our bilateral relationship in a new positive direction, and are working with the Greek government to broaden our dialogue beyond the perennial

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regional problem areas, to broader common strategic interests. Your meeting with Dora will offer an excellent opportunity to reinforce this momentum - to encourage Greece to step up its support in Afghanistan and Pakistan, to continue to support Turkey's EU orientation as the GOG tries to work through the bilateral differences confounding that relationship, and to play a responsible role in support of European energy diversification.

16. (C) Dora will be open to pressing within the GOG to do more on these issues, within the bounds of her political ambitions. She will certainly ask your help in obtaining and effectively implementing migrant re-admission agreements from the Afghan and Pakistani governments, source countries for many of the 150,000 illegal immigrants arriving in Greece. She recently told us that having such agreements would help the GOG address the migration issue, in part by giving cover for greater GOG expenditures on humanitarian relief - both here in Greece and in-theater.

17. (C) Currently two of the three remaining agreements needed for the Visa Waiver program are scheduled to be signed in Corfu. The need for visas has been a perennial irritant to successive Greek governments. Dora will welcome the opportunity to show her success in delivering to the Greeks this major benefit and will want to present this as overcoming the major remaining hurdle for Greece to enter the program. She is concerned by our efforts to parse our public language in the face of a remaining DHS site visit, as she has gone out on a limb to remove any further obstacles to the signing of the documents. This has generated a fair amount of heat in the press for "giving away" Greek legal protections in the face of U.S. pressure. If the U.S. refers to these signings as just one more step on the long road to visa waiver she will be severely criticized for having given in while still leaving the U.S. in a position to impose further conditions.

18. (C) On Turkey, while willing to continue to engage politically on key issues and to support Turkey's EU accession, she may note Turkey's unwillingness to stop overflights of Greek-inhabited islands, and to help on immigration as key sticking points. Dora and PM Karamanlis are personally committed to supporting Turkey's EU accession - both in Brussels and at home. They do this because it is the right thing for Greece, for Turkey, and for the EU. But in today's superheated political environment, with a one-seat parliamentary majority and trailing in the polls,

they are finding it increasingly difficult to manage this line. Embassies Athens and Ankara are working the problem of rising Aegean tensions and have suggested that the two sides review their mechanisms for dialogue and undertake confidence building mechanisms that would change the atmosphere. Erdogan's last minute cancellation to attend the new Acropolis Museum opening further strained relations and Dora's chance to sit down with Turkish FM Davutoglu in Corfu will be an important opportunity to get the engagement back on track. If both the Greek and Turkish militaries refrain from ill-considered testosterone-induced adventurism in the meantime, we might see the beginning of a new dynamic. You should encourage Dora to maintain the high road on Turkey and focus on what Greece itself can do to help change the atmosphere.

¶9. (C) Dora's first husband was killed by November 17 terrorists in 1989, and she may raise the resurgent threat of domestic terrorist groups, including Revolutionary Struggle (which launched an RPG at the U.S. Embassy in 2007) and the new group Sect of Revolutionaries, which killed a Greek police officer on June 17, in the first such fatal attack in years. These and other violent anarchist and far-left groups have been increasingly active since the December 2008 riots, and this, in combination with fears about illegal immigration and the possible emergence of international terrorists in Greece, is feeding a growing public sense of insecurity. You can express our support for Greece and our willingness to help in the fight against terrorist groups that have also targeted the U.S. in the past.

¶10. (C) The Foreign Minister is unlikely to take the initiative in raising the Macedonia name issue. She and the Prime Minister believe that the GOM Prime Minister is not serious in his desire to solve the issue with Greece because he gains significant domestic political advantage from a hard-line approach. At the same time, with their slim one-vote majority in the parliament, they are not in a position to offer any further significant concessions. The fact that Dora's father's government fell over having taken a too

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progressive of an approach on this issue is never far from their consciousness.

¶11. (C) As for the substance of the OSCE discussion of European security, you will find the Greeks largely in agreement with our approach: they want to launch a "Corfu Process" which, in Bakoyannis's words, would entail an open ended dialogue at ambassador/expert level, grounded in the OSCE and focusing on all OSCE "baskets" of security including 21st century security challenges. Dora has told us she sees an initial "Corfu-to-Athens discussion," with a stock-taking in Athens at the December OSCE Ministerial.

¶12. (SBU) Finally, Dora has also staked out a personal interest in the Women Against Terrorism Conference that she first announced last December when taking the OSCE Chairmanship. She is waiting to firm up the date (probably October) until she has a chance to discuss with the Secretary her possible participation. We have been in touch with S/CT and S/GWI on this conference and have helped put them in contact with international women's NGOs, including Sisters Against Violent Extremism (SAVE).
SPECKHARD